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BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Conqueror.*



STARTLING NEWS.

STRAIGHT TO THE MARK.

CHAPTER XLIX.—WHAT CAN IT MEAN?

Whoso shall tell a tale after a man,
He moste rehersse as neighe as ever he can,
Everich word. —*Chaucer.*

AS soon as Mrs. Beverley's guests were gone, and she could compose herself sufficiently to decide upon any course of action, she took her daughter's maid on one side, and desired her to go

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quickly to Mr. Darville's rooms and to make inquiry there as quietly as possible, whether Miss Beverley had been seen or heard of; she was also to gain all the information that she could about the movements and whereabouts of the two gentlemen, Victor and Louis Darville. Neither of them had been at the counting-house for two or three days past as she knew; but her husband could not tell her whether they were in London or not, or on what day the younger of them was to sail for America.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

The maid hurried away full of importance, and hailing a cab, drove to the end of the street in which the Darvilles' lodging was situated. There she alighted, and making her way on foot to the house, rang the area bell. A servant looked up from the area and told her, before she had time to speak, that there was nobody at home.

"Where are they all gone?" the maid inquired.

"Missis is gone to a tea-party, and the gentlemen is gone to Liverpool," was the answer. "One of them is gone away for good and all, and the other is gone to see him off; so they are all gone."

"You have not had any visitors here this evening, have you?" the maid asked.

"No, never a creature, only the milk, and he did not come in."

"But I mean parlour visitors—gentlefolks?"

"No, there has not been a gentleman here all day."

"Nor a lady?"

"No, nor a lady."

"If a lady should call," said the messenger, "you must send word to our place immediately; do you hear?"

"Where is your place?"

"Mr. Beverley's, Mulberry Lawn. Don't you know it?"

"I have got nobody to send," said the servant, whose name was Kitty. "Missis is out, and how am I to keep my eye upon a lady as calls, if she walks away again? What is it all about, miss?"

"You must manage it somehow; it will be well worth your while; I don't know what our people would not pay if you were to bring them news of the lady. I should not wonder if there was to be a handbill out to-morrow offering a reward—a hundred pounds at least. The butler said something of the sort."

"La, miss, you don't say so," cried Kitty, with a thrill of curiosity and excitement. "What lady is it?"

"I don't know whether I can trust you," said the other, who had already exceeded her commission very largely; "will you promise never to repeat it to anybody if I tell you? Well then, it's our young lady, Miss Beverley. She is missing, left her home, gone to Gretna Green I think, but there;—I'm so put about I don't know what I say. Be sure you don't tell any one what I have named, and if you find out anything about Mr. Darville—it's the elder, Mr. Victor, that's suspected—come directly to the Lawn and ask for me."

Kitty promised to do her best to earn the reward, and the maid having given her the address, departed. Kitty looked after her, and bethought herself what steps she could take, and whether it might not be as well to mention it to the policeman, whose form she noticed pacing slowly along on the other side of the street. It was well that he did not stop to speak to her, or she would probably have forgotten her promise of secrecy.

"I only wish the young lady would call," she said to herself. "I would ask her to walk in, and then turn the key upon her. Gone and run away has she? What a way they must be in, poor things, at her home! I wish I could find her for them, and relieve their anxious minds. A hundred pounds! Oh lor!"

But Kitty had no opportunity of putting her humane desire into execution. No lady called at the house that evening, and though she stood upon the

area steps till a late hour, looking up the street and down it, no one whom she could with any show of reason arrest on suspicion of having run away from her parents passed the house.

The two Darvilles were gone, as Kitty had said, to Liverpool. They were detained there three or four days, and then Victor, having taken leave of his brother, returned by an early train to London. It was not much past noon when he arrived there, and he went direct to the counting-house. He had stayed away longer than he intended, and was anxious to report himself to Mr. Beverley as soon as possible. But Mr. Beverley was not there, and had not been at his post for three days. A report had reached the office that something was wrong at the Lawn, but no particulars were known, and in Mr. Darville's absence none of the clerks had taken upon themselves to make any inquiries. It was supposed that Mr. Beverley was unwell; but if anything serious had been the matter they would no doubt have been informed of it. Victor was uneasy at what he heard, and finding that there were some small matters which required attention, he wrote a business letter to Mr. Beverley, and enclosed with it a short and separate note, hoping that they were all well, and that there was no truth in the rumour which had reached him, and that nothing had occurred to cause them anxiety or sorrow. He begged particularly for a reply to this note as well as to the letter which it accompanied, and sent both by a special messenger, who was to bring back an answer.

Mr. Beverley wrote a reply, in business form, to the business letter; and sent with it a private note to Mr. Darville, thanking him for his inquiries, and assuring him that they were all well, and free from any such anxieties or troubles as he had referred to. After that Victor went to his desk again, with a heart much relieved; not altogether satisfied, perhaps, for there was always just a spark of hope in his breast that any change, any excitement, any misfortune even, might open the way to some fortunate result for him; and it was a little disappointing to be told that all things were going on in their usual course. But his alarm was removed; and after having attended to the most pressing matters in his department, he went home to his lodging, intending to begin regular work again on the following morning.

He had scarcely reached his room when his landlady, who had followed him up the stairs, with the maid Kitty at her heels, began in a confidential sort of manner,

"Have you heard anything about Mr. Beverley since you came back, sir?"

"No, nothing particular."

"Because such a strange thing happened the day before yesterday."

"What was it?"

"Why, if you please, sir—" Kitty began.

"Leave it to me, Kitty," said the landlady. "You can speak afterwards."

"Yes 'm," said Kitty, who was aggrieved at having her story taken from her, and feared that the hundred pounds might follow in the same direction; "but it was me as heard all about it, sir; and it was me as had to do with it; for missis was gone out to a tea-party that night; so of course I know best."

"Tell me, then, Kitty."

But the landlady again thrust her on one side, and ordered her to go downstairs; and Victor, who was

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impatient to hear what was to be told, began to be in despair between them; for when one began the other interrupted her, and then they wrangled together, so that he could learn nothing from either of them.

"One at a time, for pity's sake!" he cried. "Tell your tale first," he said to the landlady; "and then Kitty shall tell it me all over again with full particulars."

"It is about Miss Beverley, sir."

"What is the matter? Tell me this instant. Is she ill?"

"No, sir; not ill, but—"

"Runn'd away, sir," Kitty interrupted; "runn'd away, and nobody can't tell where she's gone to."

"Her maid came round here the night before last," the landlady continued, "to ask if we had seen anything of her, as she had left her home."

"Left her home!"

"Yes, sir; quite sudden and unexpected."

"At night?"

"Yes, sir; a wet and sloppy night, too."

"And her maid came here to seek her?"

"Yes, sir," Kitty again interrupted; "she came straight to this house to see if her young lady had come here, and to know where you was and what you was doing. Mrs. Beverley sent her, and if I could find her anywhere about I was to have a hundred pounds."

In the midst of his amazement and distress at this strange story, Victor Darville felt a thrill of pleasure when he heard that Mrs. Beverley had thought it probable, or even possible, that her daughter had been in communication with him. To his eager mind it was proof positive that Joan still thought of him and loved him, for surely Mrs. Beverley must know what was the real state of her daughter's affections. Why she should leave home at all was a mystery, but that her parents should send to his home to inquire for her made his heart leap for joy. Then, again, there was Mr. Beverley's letter denying that they had any cause for anxiety; therefore, whatever alarm they might have experienced had been allayed; it had been all a mistake, no doubt; they had missed their daughter for a time, and had been uneasy about her; probably she had been out to some late service at St. Winifred's; he knew that she was in the habit of going to church at all hours: that would account for everything.

Kitty, however, was not to be silenced. It was her turn to speak now, and she went over all that the landlady had said with redoubled emphasis, determined not to be outdone. The young lady as came to tell her about it was the young lady's own lady's-maid, and knew everything, and she said there was to be a reward offered to any one as would go after the young lady and bring her back, and nobody had had the reward, as ever she had heard, therefore it was not likely as the young lady was brought back. There had been a lot of people at the house to dinner, and they had been all sent away again in a hurry, without so much as a sandwich or a bit of bread and cheese; so it must have been something very serious for all of them. Mr. Beverley was gone off his head almost, and Mrs. Beverley was as bad, and no wonder. The young lady's lady's-maid herself was so put about, and had got such a turn, that she did not know whether she was standing on her head or her heels—she had said so in those very words. And as for Kitty herself, she felt all curdled like.

Victor, being more interested in the cause than in the effects so eloquently described by the maid-of-all-work, managed to silence her; and when he had put the two women out of the room, drew Mr. Beverley's note from his pocket and read it over carefully. It was short, but decided, and left no room for doubt that whatever alarm they might have felt had turned out to be groundless. It was kindly worded, too, and Mrs. Beverley had joined in the expression of thanks to him for the interest he had manifested.

"I think," he said to himself, "I think I will go to Mulberry Lawn this evening; I may perhaps see Mr. Beverley. It is clear that they sent here three days ago, and I was not at home. I think perhaps I ought to call after that; they cannot be annoyed at my doing so, especially as I presume Miss Beverley is absent."

He acted upon this idea at once, stopping only to change his dress after his journey. He had a good excuse for calling at Mulberry Lawn after all that had happened, and he could not help hoping, notwithstanding what had passed between Mr. Beverley and his brother, that he should meet with a pleasant reception.

CHAPTER L.—A BARGAIN.

Was I deceived? or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?

—Milton.

It was late in the evening when Victor Darville arrived at Mr. Beverley's, and when the door was opened it was apparent that dinner was going on. The footman hesitated about asking him to enter, and sent the butler to deal with him according to his superior discretion.

"They are at dinner," said the butler, in a decided manner, as if that answer ought to suffice. A few months back he would have asked Mr. Darville to "walk in" at any hour of the day or night, almost; but servants are very often like barometers—you may read in their faces before you enter the house a general forecast of the weather which may be expected inside. Barometers, however, are not infallible.

"They are at dinner," said the butler again, seeing that Victor did not immediately depart, but seemed to hesitate what he should do.

"I'll wait till they have done," said Victor. "Take my name in presently."

"I'll take it in with the dessert," said the butler; "I can't do it sooner."

Victor sat down in Mr. Darville's morning-room, or "study," as he called it. Everything seemed to be going on as usual in the house; that was reassuring so far. To be sure one must dine, whatever happens: neither joy nor sorrow can be allowed to interrupt for any length of time such necessities. But it was a relief to Victor to observe no signs of disorder or distress in the establishment. At the same time the thought occurred to him how should he justify this intrusion? Would it not seem as if he had presumed upon a very trifling event, a mere accident, a mistake which probably had better have been forgotten, to make his way into a house where his visits were not welcome?

He had leisure, while waiting, to reflect once more upon the events of the last few days and upon the consequences which they might possibly involve for himself. His brother had repeated to him faithfully the substance of his conversation with Mr. Beverley at the counting-house, and he knew that for the

present he must not look for any more intimate relations with his principal than the business partnership which had been promised. He felt that neither Mr. nor Mrs. Beverley had ever given a cordial sanction to his engagement with their daughter. They would have preferred a better match for her, in a worldly point of view; though they would not have thrown any obstacle in the way, if everything had gone on smoothly between himself and Joan. Now, however, they had become estranged, chiefly through his own conduct. Mr. Beverley had been informed of the circumstances which had, in a manner, compelled him to stand aloof for a time, and could give him credit for the honourable motives by which he had been actuated; but it was more than probable that Miss Beverley was still ignorant of these facts, and might think that he had ceased to care for her. He knew that she had been displeased with him for not taking her into his confidence, and he fancied she might have given way to this feeling of jealousy and suspicion, until she had at length persuaded herself that he was unworthy of her, or that he was behaving very badly towards her. This had been his greatest trouble. He had written letter after letter, entreating her to think charitably of him, and pleading the hard necessity which compelled him to absent himself from the Lawn, and repress, for a time, the dearest and fondest hopes and expectations of his life—and so forth, but had never sent one of them. He had torn them all up as soon as written. It was impossible to give explanations without reflecting upon others; and without explanations he felt persuaded that nothing he could say or write would be of any avail. He could only hope that the impatience which Joan had manifested in regard to his secrecy had been more affected than real, and that she would trust him in spite of all appearances against him.

But now, whatever Joan might think of him, his suit was forbidden. Both father and mother had set themselves against it. They had got rid of him, and did not wish for a renewal of the relations which had once existed. Mr. Beverley had told him so through his brother, and Mrs. Beverley, he felt sure, would be even more decided on that point. Still, he could not but feel that he was not so far removed from the great object of his desires as he had been a week or two earlier. The cause of offence was removed; Louis was gone, and would no more, by his indiscretions, threaten to bring ruin and disgrace upon his name. "There was still room for hope," he thought, "still room for hope."

His reflections were interrupted by the appearance of the butler, who entered the room softly, and advanced to where he was sitting. The barometer had risen rapidly, for the man was leaning forward with a respectful smile upon his face. "Please to walk into the dining-room, sir," he said.

Victor felt his heart beat rapidly. This was the last thing that he had expected. "Would Joan be there?" he thought. He had heard Mrs. Beverley's voice when the door was opened; therefore, the ladies had not yet left the room. His name had gone in with the dessert, and he had been invited to follow it almost immediately. "Would Joan be there to receive him, or was she, indeed, gone?" A moment sufficed to answer the inquiry. Mr. and Mrs. Beverley were alone in the room. They both shook hands with him, and a chair was placed for him at the table and a few commonplace remarks were made

about the weather and such usual topics. "Everything commonplace; everything as usual," Victor thought.

"Any news from the city?" Mr. Beverley asked.

"No," Darville answered, hesitatingly. They evidently thought he had called about business. What would they think of him when they discovered that he had nothing particular to tell? "I hope you are better, Mr. Beverley," he said, when the butler had again withdrawn, and, as he hoped, finally.

"Thank you, yes; I am very well."

"And Mrs. Beverley? I heard you had been indisposed."

Mrs. Beverley was also better.

"May I ask after Miss Beverley?"

"Joan is well, I hope, in health. She is not at home, as you know."

"I did not know," he replied. "At least, I did not feel sure."

Then there was silence. Victor longed, of course, for an explanation of the event which Kitty had related with so much emphasis and minuteness, but felt that it might not be agreeable to his hosts for any allusion to be made to the subject. He sat still, therefore, embarrassed, red, conscious that their eyes were upon him, but saying nothing.

"Joan is not with us," Mrs. Beverley repeated; "and as things have been said about her which are not true, I may as well explain to you, as far as I am able, what has really happened."

He noticed that Mrs. Beverley had twice used her daughter's Christian name in speaking of her to him, and it gave him great pleasure each time. Now he was going to be taken into their confidence. All this looked very promising.

"The day before yesterday," Mrs. Beverley said, "we had a dinner-party, at least we were to have had one. Joan never was fond of company, as you know; but we were surprised, nevertheless, that when the guests arrived Joan did not appear. She had gone out instead of dressing for dinner, and no one knew what had become of her. We were very much annoyed, of course, not to say alarmed."

"There was nothing to be alarmed about," Mr. Beverley murmured.

"True; but we did not know that. Both Mr. Beverley and I," she continued, "were frightened. There were circumstances—to which I need not refer particularly—which gave us cause for anxiety; we did not know what had become of her, and for the time it made us very miserable."

"Yes?" Victor exclaimed, for Mrs. Beverley made a long pause, and he was anxious to hear more. "Yes? and now you are relieved?"

"The company went away without sitting down to table, which they need not have done," Mrs. Beverley continued, "and so the report got spread abroad, which of course you have heard, that something very sad had happened."

"I did not hear any report," said Victor; "I heard nothing but just what you have told me. I am all anxiety until I hear more."

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Beverley; "then if you have not heard the report I need not contradict it; the less said the better."

"Yes, but Miss Beverley? what had happened to her, and where is she?"

"Joan is in a convent," said Mrs. Beverley, solemnly."

"In a convent! impossible!"

All Victor Darville's colour disappeared in a moment; a clammy perspiration broke out upon his face.

"A convent, Mrs. Beverley!" he exclaimed again; "you cannot be in earnest?"

"Well, then, a sisterhood, which is nearly the same thing, I fancy."

"She does not intend to remain there, surely?"

"I do not know what she intends. Joan has been so very quiet and mysterious lately, I have really not known what to make of her. For weeks past she has thought of nothing but church-going. St. Winifred's has been her great comfort and delight. Early and late, at all hours of the day, she has been in and out of the house attending services there. It was very inconvenient, but we could not say anything against it."

"It was the only consolation she had," said Mr. Beverley, gloomily.

"My dear," his wife interrupted, frowning at him.

So then Joan has been in want of consolation, and I am not to know it, Victor said to himself.

"It does not signify," Mr. Beverley murmured.

"So, as I was saying," Mrs. Beverley went on, "Joan was devoted to St. Winifred's; and when I told her about having company she seemed to set her face against it; and because I urged her to rouse herself and be like other people, she stole away out of the house, and went and joined a sisterhood. She left a little note to say where she was gone, but it fell upon the floor and was not discovered till later in the evening. Now you know all."

Victor Darville did not know quite all. He did not know that the sudden resolve which Miss Beverley had formed was a consequence of the belief, induced by her mother's ambiguity of speech, that he, Victor Darville, had finally deserted her, and was going abroad immediately, if not already gone. He did not know that Mrs. Beverley had deceived her daughter by an accident, and had left the deceit to rankle deliberately and purposely. But he judged instinctively that Joan still loved him, and that the interdict imposed upon them both by her parents had alone been the cause of her misery and of her flight.

Mrs. Beverley, when she had finished her story, rose and left the room. Victor opened the door for her and then returned to his place. He could see that she was much affected, and that pride and anger contended in her with the gentler emotions of a mother's heart. He wondered what had been her motive for taking him thus into her confidence, and hoped to hear more from Mr. Beverley. That gentleman sat for some time moody and taciturn, only answering with a monosyllable any remarks that Victor ventured to offer. The latter at length rose to go. Mr. Beverley took his hand when he intended it.

"Your brother is gone, I suppose?" he said.

"Yes, Mr. Beverley."

"I hope he will do well."

"I have great confidence in him now."

"He told you what had passed between us on the day when he wished me good-bye?"

"Yes," said Victor. "I hope, however—"

"If I had had a little more time for reflection," Mr. Beverley continued, "I am not sure that I should have spoken as I did."

"Thank you, Mr. Beverley; thank you a thousand times."

"Don't be impulsive," the old gentleman said, slowly, but with a smile. "You are not out of the wood yet, and Joan is not out of her—convent."

"She cannot intend to remain there!"

"She does intend it. Mrs. Beverley went to see her to-day, and she was very decided. Of course she can leave it at any time; but she will not hear of it at present. Perhaps if she had known that you were coming here to-night it might have been different."

"May I go and see her?"

"You would not be admitted."

"May I write to her?"

"I doubt whether your letter would reach her."

"How, then, am I to communicate with her?"

"You must find that out for yourself."

"Where is this sisterhood situated?"

Mr. Beverley gave him the address. "Shall I write it down for you?" he asked.

"It is quite unnecessary. I shall remember it—only too well, I fear. Are you going to the counting-house to-morrow, sir?"

"Yes; I hope so."

"Can you spare me then for part of the day?"

"For the whole of it, if necessary."

"Good night, then. Heaven bless you, Mr. Beverley! I hope I may be successful. I will just speak to Mrs. Beverley, and then go."

"Leave Mrs. Beverley alone to-night," he said. "Keep your own counsel. Tell no one what I have said. If you can bring her daughter back to her, if you can restore Joan to us, as she used to be before these troubles began, then I venture to promise that Mrs. Beverley will give you a hearty welcome for her sake; and I, I will give you—we will both give you—"

"Joan?"

"Yes, Victor."

Not another word was said. Mr. Beverley accompanied Victor Darville to the door, saw him depart, and closed it after him.

"If he cannot prevail with her," he said to himself, "no one else will."

FLOWERS AND THEIR FOLK-LORE.

BY THE REV. T. THISELTON DYER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "ENGLISH FOLK-LORE."

XI.



EW flowers enliven our gardens at this dull season of the year, but among them is the black hellebore, or Christmas rose. It was well known to the physicians of antiquity, and hence it made a conspicuous figure in the poetical fables of early writers. It is called the Christmas rose because its petals, when expanded, have a strong resemblance to the common dog-rose which adorns our hedges. Its other name, hellebore, is derived from the Greek words which mean "to destroy pasture," on account of the poisonous properties of its roots and leaves.

It was largely used by the ancients to purify their houses and to hallow their dwellings. It was, also, a popular notion that this plant, when strewn over their floors, drove away evil spirits, and, on this account, this piece of superstition was performed with great devotion, and accompanied with the singing of solemn hymns. They thus introduced a real evil into their houses instead of an imaginary one, as the perfume of the Christmas rose is considered to be highly injurious to health. In the same manner the ancients were in the habit of blessing their cattle with the hellebore, so as to keep them free from the spells and influence of every kind of evil. For the performance of such charms as these, the plant was dug up from the ground with many religious ceremonies, and every mark of reverence was attached to this important act. In the first place, a circle was drawn with a sword round the plant, and then turning to the east, a humble prayer was made by the devotee to Apollo and Esculapius for leave to dig up the sacred root. Particular attention was paid to the flight of the eagle during the ceremony, for should this bird approach near the spot during the celebration of the rite, it was believed to predict the certain death of the person who took up the root during the course of the year. The Christmas rose was also popularly termed in ancient times "Melampodium," in honour of Melampus, a celebrated physician, who flourished at Pylos, in the Peloponnesus, about 1530 years before the birth of Christ. He is said to have cured the daughters of one of the kings of Argos of mental derangement with this plant, and from this circumstance it became so famous a medicine for people affected with mental diseases that "sail to Anticyra" became a common proverb in reference to mad persons—Anticyra, an island in the Gulf of Corinth, being a locality where the hellebore flourished in very great abundance. The ancient Gauls are said to have dipped their arrows in the juice of this plant, under an impression that it rendered all the game killed with them the more tender. It was said to be a specific for the cure of melancholy, and Gerard alludes to it as being one of the flowers growing in his garden. In the year 1676, the author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy" adds the hellebore to the other emblematical figures of his frontispiece, with the following lines :

"Borage and hellebor fill two scenes,
Soveraign plants to purge the veins
Of melancholy, and cheer the heart
Of those black fumes which make it smart,
To clear the brain of misty fogs,
Which dull our senses, and soul clogs;
The best medicine that e'er God made
For this malady, if well assaid."

One of the most popular plants at this season is the holly, which, with its dark shiny leaves and bright red berries, is much in request for dressing up our churches and houses at Christmas. On this account one of its popular names is "Christmas." The term holly is in all probability a corruption of holy, as this plant has been used from time immemorial as a charm against evil influences. Hence it was hung round or planted near houses as a protection against lightning. Its common use at Christmas is, says Mr. Napier in his "Folk-lore of the West of Scotland" (1819, p. 121), "apparently the survival of an ancient Roman custom occurring during the festival to Saturn, to which god the holly was dedi-

cated. While the Romans were holding this feast, which occurred about the time of the winter solstice, they decked the outsides of their houses with holly. At the same time the Christians were quietly celebrating the birth of Christ, and to avoid detection they outwardly followed the custom of their heathen neighbours and decked their houses with holly. In this way the holly came to be connected with holy also." It is curious that Shakespeare only once mentions the holly, and then in "As You Like It" (Act II, Sc. 7) :—

"Heigh-ho! sing heigh-ho! unto the green holly;
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly;
Then heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly."

Holly is used in some districts for divination. Thus in Northumberland* we hear of a he-holly and a she-holly, according as it is with or without prickles, the leaves of the she-holly being alone deemed proper for divination. These must be plucked late on a Friday night by persons careful to preserve an unbroken silence from the time they go out to the next morning's dawn. The leaves must be collected in a three-cornered handkerchief, and on being brought home nine of them must be selected, tied with knots into the handkerchief, and placed beneath the pillow. Dreams worthy of all credit will attend this rite, and no small importance is consequently attached to them, as they are supposed, in the most unerring manner, to predict future events. The holly, on account of its prickly leaves, is much used for hedges :—

"A hedge of holly, thieves that would invade
Repulses like a growing palisade."

John Evelyn, in his Diary, alluding to this plant, asks, "Is there under heaven a more glorious and refreshing sight of the kind than such an impregnable hedge, glittering with its armed and varnished leaves, the taller standards at orderly distances blushing with their natural coral?" Evelyn had such a hedge at Say's Court, four hundred feet long, nine feet high, and five feet broad, which he planted at the suggestion of Peter the Great, who resided at his house while he worked in the Deptford Dock-yard.

The mistletoe from the earliest times has been an object of interest to naturalists on account of its curious growth, deriving its subsistence entirely from the branch to which it annexes itself. Thus Herrick describes it as—

"The mystic mistletoe,
Which has no root and cannot grow
Or prosper but by that same tree
It clings about."

The Greeks and Romans both knew of this plant, and the Druids held it in the greatest veneration. The ceremony of gathering it at the commencement of the year was performed with every kind of pomp. The Druid priests, we are informed, went in solemn procession into the forests, where they raised a grass altar at the foot of the finest oak on which the mistletoe was found growing, and inscribed on the trunk of the tree the names of the most powerful among their deities. The Chief Druid, clad in white robes, then ascended the tree, bearing a consecrated golden pruning-hook, with which he cropped the

* Henderson's "Folk-lore of Northern Counties," 1879, p. 100.

mistletoe, and dropped it into a "white sagum," or pure white cloth of wool, held out beneath the tree by the remaining priests. Should any part of the plant accidentally touch the ground, it was considered to be an omen of some dire misfortune about to visit the land. This ceremony was celebrated on the sixth day of the moon, and when it was concluded a sacrifice was made of two white bulls. Our practice of decorating houses at Christmas with mistletoe is probably a remnant of this superstitious custom. Brand thinks that this plant was never put up in churches except by mistake or ignorance of the sextons, "it being a heathenish and profane plant, distinguished in pagan rites." It is certain, however, that during the feudal ages the mistletoe was gathered with much solemnity on Christmas-eve, and hung up in the great hall with loud shouts of rejoicing. In many country places the entire plant is still hung up in the kitchens of farmhouses, etc. Various superstitious notions are still attached to it, which too are not confined to our own country. Shakespeare alludes to it in his "Titus Andronicus" (Act II, Sc. 3), and calls it the "baleful mistletoe," and Gay styles it the "sacred mistletoe." In Halstein, the mistletoe is the "märentaken," or "branch of spectres," and is supposed to confer upon its possessor the power of seeing ghosts. No allusion to kissing under the mistletoe is met with earlier than the middle of the seventeenth century.

The bay, which is another plant used for Christmas decorations, is also a funereal flower, on account of its symbolical meaning, being an emblem of the resurrection. Sir Thomas Browne tells us that when seemingly dead it will revive from the root, and its dry leaves resume their wonted vitality again. It was also supposed, in days gone by, to possess the property of protecting from the mischief of lightning and thunder, a property, says Sir Thomas Browne, common with the fig-tree, eagle, and skin of a seal. Shakespeare alludes to it in his "Richard II" (Act II, Sc. 4):—

"Tis thought the king is dead. We will not stay,
The bay-trees in our country are all withered."

Mr. Ellacombe remarks, however, in his "Plant-lore of Shakespeare" (p. 23), that Shakespeare must have copied from some Italian source the superstition that the bay-trees in a country withered and died when any great calamity was approaching. There is no evidence that such an idea ever prevailed in this country. The bay is sometimes used for love divinations, its leaves when crushed in the hollow of the hand being supposed to tell the truth of the lover by a crackling sound made. It was formerly the custom at great entertainments to decorate the chief dish with wreaths of flowers and evergreens.

We must not omit to mention the ivy, which together with the holly has been also in request for Christmas decorations. Old writers seemed to have assumed a curious rivalry between these two plants for the foremost place in Christmas festivities; and a well-known carol of the time of Henry VI describes a contest between the two, in which the holly has the mastery.

"Holly he hath berries as red as any rose,
The foresters, the hunters, keep them from the does;
Ivy she hath berries as black as any sloe,
Then come the owls and eat them as they go.

Holly he hath birds, a full fair flock,
The nightingale, the popinjay, the gentle laverock;
Good ivy, say to us, what birds hast thou?
None but the owl that cries, "How, how!"

Ivy is not without its medicinal charms, for Gerard tells us that its "leaves laid in water for a day and a night's space, help sore and smarting waterish eyes if they be bathed and washed with the water wherein they have been infused." Formerly an ivy bush was hung outside taverns as a sign, in which there is no doubt a trace of classical allusion, as the ivy was always sacred to Bacchus. Hence arose the proverb, "Good wine needs no bush," implying that real good wine is of itself a sufficient recommendation without requiring to be advertised. Thus an old writer remarks:—

"I hang no ivie out to sell my wine,
The nectar of good wits will sell it selfe."

"An owl in an ivy bush," was another proverb, denoting perhaps the union of wisdom, or prudence, with conviviality, as "Be merry and wise." A bush of ivy, however, was generally supposed to be the favourite residence of an owl. According to a well-known distich which refers to Christmas-day:—

"Then ivy and holly berries are seen,
And yule clog and wassail come round again."

The blooming of the apple-tree in autumn is in many places considered unlucky, and the Northamptonshire peasantry are wont to exclaim:—

"A bloom upon the apple-tree when the apples are ripe,
Is a sure termination to somebody's life."

Formerly apples were much used for divination, especially at Christmas-time. The custom of throwing the peel of an apple over the head, says Mr. Conway, "marriage or single blessedness being foretold by its remaining entire or breaking, and that of finding in a peel so cast the initial of the coming sweetheart, is well known in England and America." In Lancashire, in order to ascertain the abode of a lover, the anxious inquirer moves round in a circle, at the same time squeezing an apple pippin between the finger and thumb. This, on pressure being employed, flies from the rind in the supposed direction of the lover's residence. In the meanwhile the following rhyme is repeated:

"Pippin, pippin, paradise,
Tell me where my true love lies!
East, west, north, or south,
Pilling brig or Cocker mouth."

We must now bring our remarks on "Flowers and their Folk-lore" to a close. Enough, however, we hope, has been written to show how wide and popular are the associations connected with these sweet ornaments of nature, and how largely, at all times, they have entered into the social and domestic events of man's life. In the words of Allan Cunningham we may sum up the moral teaching of our subject, as applied with Christian limitations:—

"There is a lesson in each flower,
A story in each stream and bower;
In every herb on which you tread
Are written words which, rightly read,
Will lead you from earth's fragrant sod
To hope, and holiness, and God."

THE PROVERBS OF RUSSIA.

RUSSIA is a country whose name is now constantly in the mouths of Englishmen. Few, however, know much about it owing to the difficulties connected with learning its language. Not many foreigners have the opportunities of knowing these people, and mere tourists are very apt to come away with wrong impressions. We shall endeavour in a short article to glance at the peasantry as they are described in their own proverbs, which hold the picture up to life.

One peculiarity of Russian peasant life is the joint family system, according to which the members of a family share a common inheritance, and live together. This system prevailed in parts of England in Anglo-Saxon times, but it is not favourable to individual exertion, and it leads to family quarrels. They find that "two bears cannot live in one den." The wife particularly suffered from it.

"The father-in-law grumbles at her,
The mother-in-law abuses her,
The brother-in-law mocks her,
The sister-in-law does her mischief,
The husband is jealous."
" Sisters-in-law are nettles."

While some Russian ladies belong to the class of strong-minded women, and are advocates of woman's rights, the peasantry in their proverbs recognise the distinct sphere of women.

" If you be a cock, crow ;
If a hen, lay eggs."

" Do not trust the wind in the fields,
Nor a woman with too much liberty."

The proverbs of Russia, like those of India, though treating women with contempt, yet recognise their power in the domestic circle. "She stoops to conquer."

" The wife, without beating the husband, rules him by her temper."

" The husband is the head, the wife the soul of the house."

Bachelors are not in high repute.

" A bachelor is a goose without water."

" A man without a wife is like a man in winter without a fur bonnet."

A man under petticoat government, or, as the Germans say, "under the slipper," is thus painted :

" A crab is not a fish among fishes,
A bat is not a bird among birds,
So a hen-pecked husband is not man among men."

The cheapness of brandy has done immense mischief among the peasantry. In a collection of twenty thousand Russian proverbs which I have, five hundred relate to drunkenness and its effects. The soldiers, who are recruited from the ranks of the peasantry, carry the village drinking habits with them, and this trait appears in various strongly-phrased proverbs. The peasants have suffered not only from drink, but from bad landlords, who have spent their money in the dissipation of great cities, leaving the peasantry in the hands of grinding agents, who were generally Germans.

" The landlord's court has a wide entrance, but a narrow exit ;" i.e., it is easy to get into his debt, but difficult to get out of it.

" Praise not the crop until it is stacked,
Praise not the landlord until he is dead."

The usurer in Russia, as in India, is a scourge to the peasant. "In the other world," says the proverb, "usurers have to count red-hot coins with bare hands."

But the worst plague to the peasant is the Tchinovnik, or official, as the Russian bureaucracy are noted for their gross oppression and bribe-taking propensities.

" The Tchinovnik only takes up his pen,
The peasants pray and birds tremble."

" To defend yourself against a thief take a stick,
To defend yourself against a Tchinovnik take a rouble."

" Fear not the law but the judge ;
A judge is like a carpenter, what he wants he carves."

" Go before God with justice,
Before the judge with money."

The Raskolniks, or Dissenters of Russia, amount probably to 15,000,000, and are an interesting class. Some express their detestation of the Greek Church thus :

" He who fears God does not go to church ;
The church is not in beams but in ribs ;"

i.e., not in the building, but in living members. They agree with the old Tartar saying—

" Songs and dances are Satan's daughters."

And they go further than the teetotalers, denouncing tobacco, tea, and coffee.

" The smoker is brother to a dog."

" Tea, the Chinese arrow, has pierced the Russian heart."

" Thunder slays the coffee-drinker."

The peasants hold the Jews in great abhorrence on account of their usury and oppression.

" A tamed wolf, a baptized Jew, and a reconciled enemy are of equal value."

" When you baptize a Jew keep him under water ;"

i.e., drown him, or he will turn renegade.

" A Russian can be cheated only by a gipsy,
A gipsy by a Jew,
A Jew by a Greek,
And a Greek by the devil."

" One Jew is equal in cheating to two Greeks,
One Greek to two Armenians."

We conclude this brief sketch with two proverbs that contain a valuable moral.

" With God go over the sea,
Without God go not over the threshold."

Against forming distant plans—

" His thoughts are over the mountains,
But death is behind his shoulder."

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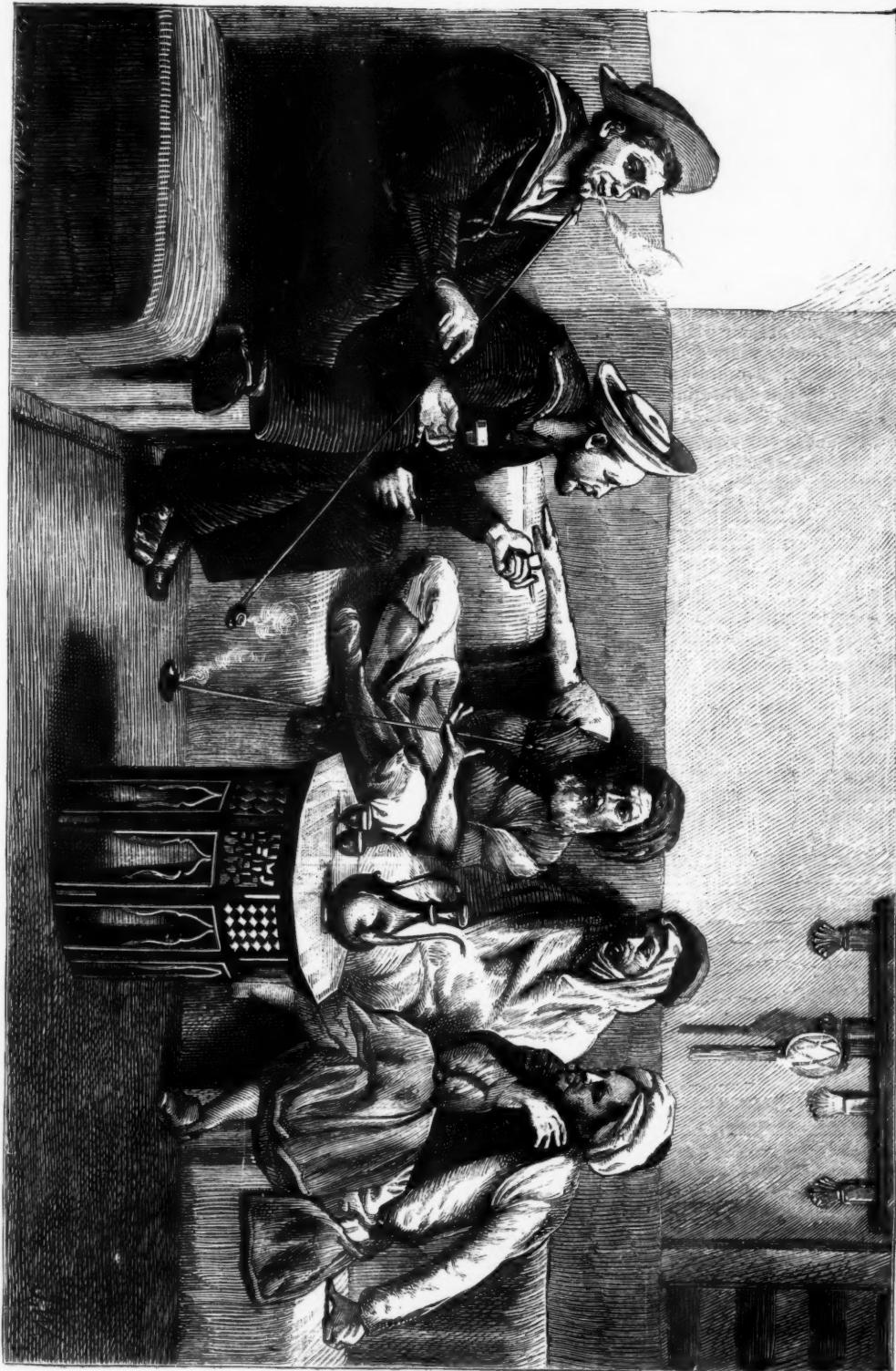
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AN EASTERN QUESTION.

From the Painting by J. E. Hodgson, A.R.A.





Zakhmi, the National Air of the Afghans.

“Zakhmi,” the national air of the Afghans, was composed by one of their wandering minstrels, named Mira, about twenty years ago. It is sung amidst the cliffs and rocks of Tirah, Swat, and Buneyr; it has been played by the half-trained band of the Ameer of Kabul, in Bala Hisār, and it has become a favourite

tune in the regiments of the Indian Army. The words of the song are foolish, although unobjectionable, but the tune is exceedingly pretty, and we are glad to be able, through the kindness of Colonel O'Bryan, commanding the 22nd P.N.I., to give the music as set by his bandmaster.

MELODY.

If played on the Pianoforte, the Bass should be taken an octave higher.

INTRO.
DUCTION.

TRIO.



The first verse of the song in Pushto is :—

Zakhmī pa gham khe nāst yam
 Da hyrān pa khatāro.
 Zarah me pa mangūl khe
 Chi nan raghla khāro.

Which may be rendered :—

Wounded with the dagger of separation
 I am sitting (silently) in grief.
 To-day when she came near me, in her hands (lit. *claws*)
 Like a little starling she took away my heart.

THE ISLINGTON FRIDAY MARKET.

A N open market for the poor man would appear to be a necessity in all great towns where the poor exist in large numbers, and probably there is no town in England with anything like a numerous population in which there is not one or more localities devoted chiefly to the traffic which is carried on between poor sellers and poor buyers. In Manchester there is the Strude Hill Market, of which the economical, industrial, and the indigent labourer are the chief patrons; and in Liverpool there is, or was, for it is some years since we visited it, the very singular institution which enjoys the sobriquet of "Paddy's Exchange," where anything and everything which all the rest of the world has rejected as useless is gathered in heaps for the competition of the children of the Green Isle. In London the poor man's market has long been relegated to the back slums and devious by-ways, with the exception that on Saturday night it squats, from immemorial and prescriptive right, on the kerbstones and in the gutters along certain suburban thoroughfares where the wheel-traffic is not very great, and which lie within easy distance of the homes of the labouring classes. These Saturday markets, however, are mainly, though by no means exclusively, stocked with provisions for the necessities of the Sunday, and the money spent in them, which amounts to tens of thousands of pounds weekly, is a part of the workman's weekly wages. But within the last few years there has gradually grown up a poor man's market of altogether a novel character in Islington, which market is held on the Friday, on the site of the new cattle market, from about noon to sunset, and in which anything saleable, either alive or dead, no matter of what description, may be sold by those who have it to sell. Horse coupers, costermongers, and the rather rowdy fraternity who deal in everything connected with horses or donkeys, have from its first beginning played the principal part in this singular mart. But the general dealer was not long in finding out that inasmuch as the new market attracted crowds of visitors, it would be worth his while to put in an appearance and turn an honest penny if he could. As the market fee is very low—in some cases as low as sixpence—the experiment was not a costly one, and that it has succeeded beyond expectation with a good many who tried it we happen to know from the best authorities. In fact, the market is often the final resource of many a respectable tradesman, who finds that there, and there only, he can get rid of his "stickers"—that is to say, of the old and dead stock which has stuck by him too long, and wouldn't "go off" at any figure he might attach to it in his own shop.

We are now going to pay an afternoon visit to this omnium-gatherum mart, in the expectation that such a description of it as we may be able to give may not be uninteresting to the reader.

Alighting from an omnibus in the Caledonian Road we are greeted with the clatter and clamour of hoofs and voices, and are soon threading our way among a crowd of noisy loungers and ranks of vehicles of all kinds towards the broad acreage of

cattle-pens surrounding the central tower of the modern Smithfield. Before reaching the market proper we come to a sort of tenth-rate Tattersall's, or horse auction, where horses imported from Russia and other northern countries are periodically put up for sale. It is a rather rough collection of brutes that are being trotted out amidst a crowd of connoisseurs and competitors quite as rough as the animals themselves. Most of these are wild-looking, shaggy, unbroken creatures, evidently terrified at the new experience to which they are subjected; and we are sorry to remark that the treatment they receive is the reverse of humane, and is often inflicted for the mere sake of raising a laugh at the odd antics of the suffering animals.

The first spectacle that meets us in the market proper is that of a regiment of donkeys, drawn up in close ranks, their heads fast bound to the stout timber rail, and their backs exposed to the greetings of all and sundry who may elect to try the strength of their arms or their cudgels upon them. The quiet creatures appear, however, for the most part to have been well fed and fairly looked after, and, from the patient and stolid indifference with which they receive the heavy thwacks bestowed on them, are evidently but too well accustomed to such usage.

Donkeys at this season of the year (for the autumn is waning towards winter when we pay our visit) are at a considerable discount, for they have had their day, and have ceased to be profitable to their temporary owners. The fine sunny weather is for the most part over; there is no more donkey-riding for the girls and boys on Hampstead Heath, or by the seaside, or other such pleasurable resorts, for the next five or six months at least, and it will hardly pay the speculators in that sort of pastime to keep the poor brutes doing nothing but eating their heads off until the long days and the fine weather shall come round again. So the "mokes" are brought to the market for sale, and may be bought at almost any price between twenty shillings and fifty, though they would fetch twice as much if the summer were coming in instead of going out. "Want to buy a donkey, sir?" "Want a fine young moke, sir?" "Warrant this here one to trot ten mile a hour, sir!" "Werry 'ansome hanimal this 'ere one, sir; good to ride or drive." Such are the appeals made to us as we pass down the long rank of patient noses tethered to the rail. The trade seems to be rather languishing, for though the would-be sellers are numerous, and now and then a moke is untied and trotted out to show his paces, but few sales seem to be effected, buyers being scarce.

Beyond the ranks of donkeys we come upon a curious and rather novel scene. It is a sort of bazaar in which everything that is in any way connected with "horse, mule, or ass" is exposed for sale on the bare ground—the granite paving-stones of the place. The list of wares thus displayed, if one had the learning to give them all a name, would make a very compendious catalogue. We cannot pretend to identify half the articles which lie in

numberless heaps before and around us, each heap being presided over by its owner or the owner's agent, such agent being, in some instances, a boy of tender years or a toddling child. All are noisy and busy, for there is no lack of trade, and the nondescript goods are changing owners rapidly. The cry from the sellers is, "All at your own price to-day, gents;" "Name your figure, and take your choice;" "No offer refused, mind!" and so on. Not a few of the queer mounds of goods are labelled at so much each—a penny or twopence, or a trifle more. Such cheap wares consist chiefly of articles, or fragments of articles, of rusty iron—big screws, washers, lynch-pins, rings of brass or white metal, iron rods of various length and thickness, pieces of gas-piping, fragments of gaseliers, odd spurs and bits, carriage lamps, buckles, cast horse-shoes, hammer-heads, axe-heads, curry-combs, etc., etc., all long past use, and mostly the despised rejecta of the stable or the smithy. At the same time, and almost in juxtaposition with all this rubbish, there are sets of harness complete, and nearly as good as new, the brazen decorations of which are polished as bright as possible, and shed quite a lustre. There are saddles, bridles, reins, traces, straps, collars, horse-cloths, nose-bags, whips—everything, in short, that an equestrian or a modern Jehu wants or is likely to want. Add to this a collection of wheels of all sorts and sizes, together with countless fragments of wheels, and you have some notion of the provision here made in behalf of the horse and his owner.

As we advance, we come upon another characteristic feature of the place. The ground here is covered, not with the disjecta of the stable and the smithy, though that is not entirely wanting, but with those of the workshop, abounding, as it does, in the materials, the tools, and the productions of nearly all industrial crafts. Here are the implements of the carpenter, the blacksmith, the saddler, the shoemaker, the coachmaker, the engineer, the navvy, the bookbinder, the optician, the artist, the house-painter and decorator, the plasterer, and scores of others, all the wares lying confusedly together, and all, in a greater or less degree, used up, broken down, or done for. Among them are a multitude of things which, perhaps, never had a name—odd-looking combinations of brass, iron, copper, and tin, and long metal tubes coiled in curious shapes; with these lie lots of old organ-pipes of all sorts, channelled wind-troughs, jaundiced-looking pianoforte keys, telescope tubes, microscope ditto, photographic cameras minus the lenses, mathematical instruments, syphons, crucibles, Leyden jars, parts of electrical machines, saccharometers, lactometers, bells, brass handles, street-door knockers, locks and keys by the hundred, and rusty nails and screws by the thousand. Here stands a man with a pile of polished brass locks, who sells the brand-new lock and key for a penny, and not far from him is a woman who has fifty different things, all remnants from the workshop, at a penny each. Then there is a man with a stock of sole-leather, which he sells by weight, and not far from him another, who deals in musical instruments, or what once were parts of such—accordions, concertinas, banjos, guitars, fiddles or parts of fiddles, fiddle-bellies, finger-boards, pegs, fiddle-bows, scroll-ends, etc. He also has a heap of sheets of music, old and new, and not a little dirty and ragged, and volumes of music in the highest state of dilapidation.

Among these miscellanea we notice a few articles

of household furniture, and as we advance the household furniture and domestic requisites gradually displace the symbols of industry. The indispensables of the kitchen are abundant, such as cooking apparatus of all kinds, stoves, fenders, fire-irons, dish covers, flat-irons, metal pails and tubs, tables, chairs, shelves, corner-cupboards, plate-racks, plates, dishes, and crockery of all kinds in all conditions. Then come carpets new and old, oilcloths and pieces of kamptulicon and linoleum in squares, in rolls, and in long strips; mats, rugs, window-curtains, bed-curtains, fragments of bed furniture of all sorts, blinds, blind-rollers, wash-stands, dressing-tables, and all the numberless trifles of the sleeping-chamber. A few yards farther and we come upon a collection of books, of which a man offers forty volumes for a shilling; they would fill a wheelbarrow, but are good for nothing but to burn, being for the most part old peerages, guide-books, and other bulky little duodecimos too minute to serve as wrapping paper, and therefore rejected by the buttermen. The same dealer exhibits pictures, framed and unframed, plain and coloured, prints, chromotypes, oleographs, and photographs, and affirms that as he has taken an oath not to carry them home again, they must be sold at whatever sacrifice. Next to him is a woman whose stock-in-trade consists of old bottles, boxes, razor-strops, knives and forks, spice-boxes, salt-boxes, rolling-pins, gridirons, Dutch ovens, whetstones, old tools, pieces of metal, broken cog-wheels, lengths of lead-piping, slabs of mahogany and oak panelling, cranks for bell-hanging, bundles of stair-rods, very small portable gas-stoves, paraffin lamps, hall lamps, gig lamps and policemen's bull's-eyes, and fifty other things, among them the time-blackened half of a human skull, for any or all of which you are to name your own price.

Puzzled, and somewhat wearied with the clatter and the din, we wander off to the right beyond the clock tower, and soon come upon the clothes market, where women in the calves' pens are selling the various items of female attire. They seem to adopt the system of Cheap Jack, putting up the articles at their own estimation and gradually reducing their demand until it is accepted. The articles are mostly more than half worn out, and some are mere rags; but bad as they are the majority of them go off, and that without any very lengthened ceremony. The buyers seem to be principally poor men's wives, who have come in search of a child's frock or jacket for sixpence, or for some cast-off gown or skirt for which they will pay even a less sum, and which may be cut down for a child's use.

Of men's clothing there seems to-day to be but little, if we except boots and shoes, of which there are heaps of deplorable relics, and hats and caps, which may be had in any quantities, and almost at any price, and apparently as good as new.

Near the south-west corner of this large area we come upon the quarter appropriated to the transactions in live-stock other than "horse, mule, or ass." Here, for instance, is an interesting convocation of piglings, little innocents entering on their second or third month of existence. They are brought here in boxes or hampers, and are taken out singly, and passed from hand to hand among the competitors, squeaking in a lively key, in spite of the caresses bestowed on them. Porkers of a more advanced age are also plentiful, but seem less attractive than the newly-weaned innocents. Pigs, we

learn on inquiry, have gone down in price of late, the reason being that the country demand has declined, the farm-labourers having lately to a great extent discarded pig-meat in favour of beef and mutton. Close to the piglings are large pens of fowls, goslings, and ducklings, each pen being surrounded by a crowd of customers of both sexes cheapening their favourites. A stout lass standing up to her middle in goslings, and with difficulty keeping her footing among them, is eloquent in praise of the noisy flock. She is skilful in catching by the neck any one of them that is pointed out, and handing him over to connoisseur or intending purchaser for judgment. Half-a-crown seems to be the standing demand for a gosling, and two shillings the price paid by the buyer. The trade is brisk, and the seller has hardly time to count her money, and rather resents having to give change. Suddenly there is an irruption of ducklings into the gosling congregation from an adjoining pen, and it would seem that the stout lass runs the risk of being extinguished; but she is quite cool under the infliction, and merely beckons to a boy, who, plunging into the struggling mass of quacking bills and fluttering feathers, grapples the intruders two or three at once, and in a few moments has sent them to the right about, pitching them neck and heels back to their own quarters. The ducklings, under the charge of a man, sell for about half the price of the goslings, and both duckling and gosling will want a good deal of feeding and fattening before they are ready for roasting. To a large class of Londoners this feeding and fattening for the table is a real pleasure. People will keep ducks, for instance, who have no place to keep them in but the street, and will have them at night in their living-rooms. Duckweed is sold regularly in some neighbourhoods, and there are not wanting men and lads who make a trade of skimming the green surface of the ponds and ditches, and selling it by measure to the duck-fanciers of the London slums and back streets. Of cocks, hens, and chickens there is also a stock in the market, but the demand for them is not as lively just now as it is for the quacking fraternities.

Of canaries in cages there is here a plentiful show. They are mostly importations from Germany; but it is whispered that they are all of them hens, though the dealers do not scruple to warrant them of the other sex. Together with the canaries are a lot of grey parrots, also in cages; but these, too, are under a cloud of suspicion, it being shrewdly conjectured that they are not quite what they should be—that they are stricken with some disease not easily cured, or it may be with that incurable disorder, old age; veneration for patriarchs does not extend to the parrot tribe.

Very near the parrot and canary-bird stands we come upon a collection of costermongers' carts and barrows, new and old, with a good many in the middle stage; together with hand-barrows, trucks, truck-wheels and carriage-wheels, and parts or fragments of the same, such as spokes, tires, axles, shafts, poles, etc. These are useful things enough, spokes being good for supplementing the failing rungs of ladders, and the various other sundries serving to effect the repairs constantly needed in the traps and carts of the travelling London dealers.

Another part of the market is devoted to carriages, carts, and vans, old cabs, hansom and four-wheelers, and a rather showy collection of harness and horse and carriage fittings of all kinds. Not far from this

interesting repertory is the horse market, a very lively scene indeed, where the skill and judgment of the most wary buyer meet their match in the plausible subtlety—not to mention knavery—of the seller. It is said that on this spot the student of equine therapeutics may meet with examples of every stage of every known disorder to which horse-flesh is liable. Still there are serviceable hacks and fast-trotting jades used to the London pavements to be met with by those who know what they are about; and it is here that the costermonger and the small travelling tradesman come to bargain for a new charger when the old one is finally doomed to the knacker's yard and the cat's-meat man. Apropos of the knacker, we may add that he also is a buyer in this market; for hither come weekly a good many specimens of mere skin and bone, living skeletons of horses, which, under the name of "racks," form one of the staples of the dealers, and which are sold as so much material for the tanner who will dress their skins, and the turner who will grind their bones (in his lathe) to make his bread, and for the ambulatory purveyor for the domestic tabbies. In the horse market one meets also with goats, which animals have from time immemorial been the associates of horses in the numerous mews and livery stables, not only of the metropolis but of other places. The reason why the goat is a favourite with horse-owners is said to be based on the conviction that his presence in a stable-yard conduces to the health of the horse, though how far experience has shown that to be the case we cannot tell. But the goat, like the horse, we are sorry to say, is frequently sophisticated by the seller. If a vicious brute of a horse gets a cruel thrashing in the morning to cure him of his vice for that day, so will an aged Nannie get coupled with an infant kid, and, so attended, sold for a mother in full milk, after her udders have been dry for years.

Judging from the class of people who frequent this Friday's market, it is pretty evident that it supplies a felt want. At first sight it would seem that the rowdy, horsey tribe who seem to spring up spontaneously wherever horses abound, have it all their own way. But it is not so; there is a considerable section of the community, among whom working men and their wives, low-class shopkeepers, peripatetic dealers, and housekeepers of the struggling order are the principal constituents. If you watch the transactions that take place you will see that a good deal of business is done, and that the artisan or his wife is a frequent buyer, and that the purchases are effected very quietly, in spite of the surrounding hubbub, the buyer often throwing down the money for a ticketed article, thrusting it in his pocket or under his arm, and walking away with it without speaking a single word. Why it is that so many things which are broken, crushed, ragged, worn out, and apparently quite done for are so readily sold seems a mystery not easily solved; the solution, however, is not so difficult. The truth is, there is a class of active, industrious, and notable people with whom the idea of mending, repairing, restoring, and "making as good as new," a thing which is apparently done for, has irresistible fascinations. They take a supreme delight in labours which to others would appear hopeless; they exercise an amount of skill and ingenuity, of patience and perseverance, in healing fractures and supplying deficiencies, that is beyond all praise; and the beauty of it is, they are always

successful, simply because they do not choose to be defeated in their endeavours, and will persevere until success is achieved. The reader who has not, at some time or other, come across such persons, must have had but small experience of the better sort of working men and working men's wives. Another class of buyers are those—and they are not a few—who buy to sell again. Hundreds and hundreds of the articles here offered for sale would have been sold long ago had they been offered in the right neighbourhood. Nothing is more important in shop-keeping than the suiting of the wares to the locality, and many a melancholy failure in business has been brought about through want of tact and judgment in this respect. Now the Friday market affords to the dealer who has made mistakes in laying in his stock the opportunity of correcting them, for he can not only dispose of his own "stickers" here, but has the chance of buying more saleable wares as cheaply as he sells his own.

The commissariat of this overflowing market is well worth a few words in conclusion. Where several thousands of persons are congregated for the best part of the day, there will be a good deal of hunger and thirst, which must be satisfied somehow. Both meats and drinks are therefore to be found in abundance, and so far as we can judge (of the viands, at least), the provisions are of good quality and conveniently cheap. A fried fish and a hunch of bread for a penny; eels *à la Bismarck*—that is, stewed in their own jelly—for the same price; fried sausage and bread for three-halfpence—these are terms which will hurt nobody. Other things are equally cheap, such as potatoes burning hot from the can, whelks, cockles, mussels, periwinkles, ham-and-beef sandwiches, sheep's trotters, and oysters of alarming dimensions fresh from the deep sea. The drinks are lemonade and ginger-beer, and if anybody wants something more potent, there is the public-house at the entrance of the market, where the thirsty men can, as many of them unhappily do, get more than is good for them.

In connection with food, we may mention as a last word—physic. Various sorts of medicines are sold here, so that a patient may physic himself without either feeing the doctor or adding three halfpence to the revenue by indulging in a box of patent pills. It is characteristic of all gatherings where the poor come to buy and sell that the herb-doctor, the professor of simples, is sure to find a welcome. Here he is, of course, and he will medicate any disorder you may choose to confide to his skill for the charge of a few pence. Rheumatism, or any other ism, is nothing to him; lumbago, sciatica, congested liver, cold in the head or chest, cough, ague, asthma, tic-douloureux, or what not, he is ready for any of the lot; you pay your pence and he gives you a bumper in a six-ounce goblet, and as you swallow it you are sure that you have something for your money, and you go away, let us hope, thoroughly cured. The most attractive medicus on the ground appears to be a Yankee, in charge of a highly-decorated dispensary on wheels, from which we observe that he draws frequent bumpers of sarsaparilla, in praise of which, as a potent strengthener of the muscles and a producer of fibre, as well as an unrivalled blood-purifier, he is profusely eloquent and rhetorical. We have not time to test his assertion that the draught is pleasant to drink, for dinner will be waiting for us at home, and we are lovers of punctuality.

Varieties.

A SOLDIER'S SPEECH.—The following extract from one of the speeches of the gallant Sir Evelyn Wood, v.c., has historical interest:—It is the fashion now to discredit some of our best traditions, but I hope our schoolboys will never cease to believe in the glorious homely words, "England expects that every man will do his duty." I have known many men of all ranks who have patiently lived and ungrudgingly died for no more brilliant reward than the quiet approval of the still, small voice. Some, alas, like Ronald Campbell, have gone away so quickly in their noble haste that they have not even heard the "Well done!" of their comrades; but their example has not been lost. When the noise and the excitement of the war is over, the soldier who has seen men die for each other or for duty's sake can never again be altogether unheroic in his life. It has been said that "there is more godliness in camp than in barracks." I endorse that cordially. There is a brotherhood in common hardship and peril. There is a reverent tenderness for the home which may never be seen again. The unalienable ties of kindred and blood come out strongly when the loneliness of death may have to be faced far away from loving hands. Though it is many years ago, I have never forgotten—and, indeed, the scene is as vivid before me this day as the morning it occurred—the face of Arthur Eyre, my adjutant and friend, as he lay sorely wounded, the last officer hit on the day Sir Garnet Wolseley entered Coomassie. For the six months we had lived and worked together this gallant youth had never failed when we were engaged to thrust himself between me and the ambushed foe. Composing his features that I might not see his sufferings, he looked up in my eyes and said, with a quietude which told me he had accurately gauged the mortal nature of his then undressed wound, "Pull my rings off for my mother." I do not believe sweethearts and parents ever get so many letters as they do from men employed on active service at remote stations. We all remember Thackeray's immortal touch when he described Ensign Stubble, on the eve of departure for Waterloo, writing home to his mother a loving letter "full of pluck and bad spelling." Well, we have improved in some respects, for the rank and file now write as well or better than Ensign Stubble did then; but the pluck is, I think, very much as it was, and the youngsters who, under experienced non-commissioned officers, vied with the veteran battalion in rolling back the long odds of twelve to one at Kambula, finally stood as steady as a wall at Ulundi, where, in the words of Scripture, "they joined battle, and the heathen, being discomfited, fled into the plain." These boy soldiers, I say, are the professional heirs of those raw militia lads whose imperturbable square repulsed the desperate onsets of Napoleon's devoted cavalry, and restored the equilibrium of shaken order.

VERY MUCH WIDOWED.—Mr. Arthur Locker writes:—"The following extract from 'Evelyn's Diary' shows that in the seventeenth century there was a Dutchwoman who in the matter of husbands outdid the famous Mrs. Abbott, of New York, who outlived seven husbands:—"Towards the end of August I returned to Haarlem. They showed us a cottage where they told us dwelt a woman who had been married to her twenty-fifth husband, and being now a widow was prohibited to marry in future; yet it could not be proved that she had ever made any of her husbands away, though the suspicion had brought her divers times to trouble."

TAXES ON AN AMERICAN WHEN IN HIS CLOTHES.—Hat, silk, 60 per cent.; ribbon, 60 per cent.; alpaca lining for brim, 50 per cent. per lb. and 35 per cent.; leather inside, 35 per cent.; muslin lining, 7½ cents a square yard; glue, 20 per cent. Coat, cloth, 55 cents a pound and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; silk lining, 60 per cent.; alpaca used therein, 50 per cent. per lb. and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; buttons, if worsted, 20 per cent. per lb. and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; velvet for collar, 60 per cent.; red worsted padding, 50 per cent. per lb. and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; hemp padding, 40 per cent. Pantaloons, cassimere, 50 per cent. per lb. and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; cotton used therein, 5 cents a square yard; hemp cloth for facing, 40 per cent.; metal buttons, 30 per cent. Vest, silk or satin, 60 per cent.; linen lining, 35 per cent.; silk buttons, 60 per cent. Braces, 35 per cent. Under-shirt, if silk, 60 per cent.; if worsted, 50 cents per lb. and 35 per cent. *ad valorem*; if cotton, 35 per cent. Drawers the same. Shirts, cotton, 5

cents a square yard ; linen for the front, 35 per cent. Boots, raw hides, 10 per cent. ; tanned leather, calf skin, 30 per cent. ; if patent leather, 35 per cent. ; soles, 35 per cent. Neckerchief, if silk, 60 per cent. Pocket-handkerchief, 35 per cent. Watch, 25 per cent. Silk watch chain, 60 per cent. —*The Hatter.*

PETTICOAT LANE SHOE MARKET.—Passing through the long avenues we alighted on the site on which old boots and shoes are exposed for sale. There were literally thousands of pairs ranging from the smallest to the largest sizes, and without exception they seemed to be the cast-offs of all Christendom. The majority were in the same state in which they had been picked from ash-pits, or taken in exchange for damaged ornaments. Some of them it is true show the blacking brush, but these are exceptions to the rule. They are sold at prices ranging from a penny to sixpence, and low as they may seem to be, in most instances they were dear at the price. We pity the mother who is forced to purchase, and the child who is compelled to wear them. And yet there are mothers and children who neither purchase nor wear aught beside.—*Boot and Shoe Reporter.*

THE MURDERER PLANT.—In these tropical forests each plant and tree seems to be striving to outvie its fellow, struggling upwards towards light and air—branch, and leaf, and stem—regardless of its neighbours. Parasitic plants are seen fastening with firm grip on others, making use of them with reckless indifference as instruments for their own advantage. Live and let live is clearly not the maxim taught in these wildernes. There is one kind of parasitic tree, very common near Para, which exhibits this feature in a very prominent manner. It is called the Sipo Matador, or the Murderer Liana. It belongs to the fig order, and has been described and figured. I observed many specimens. The base of its stem would be unable to bear the weight of the upper growth ; it is obliged, therefore, to support itself on a tree of another species. In this it is not essentially different from other climbing trees and plants ; but the way the Matador sets about it is peculiar, and produces certainly a disagreeable impression. It springs up close to the tree on which it intends to fix itself, and the wood of its stem grows by spreading itself like a plastic mould over one side of the trunk of its supporter. It then puts forth from each side an arm-like branch, which grows rapidly, and looks as though a stream of sap were flowing and hardening as it went. This adheres closely to the trunk of the victim, and the two arms meet on the opposite side and blend together. These arms are put forth at somewhat regular intervals in mounting upwards, and the victim, when its strangler is full-grown, becomes tightly grasped by a number of inflexible rings. These rings gradually grow larger as the murderer flourishes, rearing its crown of foliage to the sky, mingled with that of its neighbour, and in course of time they kill it by stopping the course of its sap. The strange spectacle then remains of the selfish parasite clasping in its arms the lifeless and decaying body of its victim, which had been a help to its own growth. Its ends have been served—it has flowered and fruited, reproduced and disseminated its kind ; and now, when the dead trunk moulders away, its own end approaches ; its support is gone, and itself also falls.”—*Bates's “Amazons.”*

NORTH-EAST PASSAGE.—The discovery of the long-desired North-east Passage was thus first announced by the correspondent of the “New York Herald” at Yokohama, under date September 4 : “Vega arrived here, and I have seen Norden-sköld, who says he left Gothenburg on July 4, 1878, and in four days arrived at Tromsoe, where he laid in furs and necessities. Between Waigat and the continent no ice was met, and crossing the Kara Sea in four days made Port Dickson. Passing mouth of Yenesei River, steered north-east, but ice somewhat arrested progress. In four days arrived at Tajoer, and on August 19, Tsejskin, the extreme northern point of Asia. After a short rest, coasted the peninsula, meeting with little ice. On the 28th, passed the entrance of the River Lena, and turned towards the New Siberian Islands, but they were not explored owing to the ice. After crossing the mouth of the Kolya River found open water, but soon after this our difficulties commenced, and increased daily. We were much delayed off Cook's Cape, Vankarem, but crossed to Kolintchin on September 27, and were there imprisoned from the 28th. Tschotchi Settlement lies in 67deg. 7min. north, 173deg. 24min. west, and here we wintered in the midst of pack ice, land being one mile distant. Our health and spirits were excellent, and there was no scurvy. Our shortest day consisted of three hours’

daylight, only upper limb of the sun being visible. Scientific and ethnographic studies were busily pursued. Some 4,000 inhabitants, called Tchikchis, living in several villages, and supporting themselves by fishing and sealing, supplied the expedition with necessaries. We found here abundance of bears and reindeer. Cold was intense, averaging 36 centigrade. Game was abundant, and in spring wild fowl came in numbers. For 264 days we were detained in the ice, but at length released ; sailed on July 18, and passed East Cape, Behring's Straits, on the 20th. We have thus accomplished our object, and established by practical proof the feasibility of the North-east Passage. Then, cruising down the Asiatic coast we reached St. Lawrence Bay, and crossed to Port Clarence, America, re-crossed to Koniyan, dredging carefully as we went, to ascertain the formation of bottom and to get specimens, for the position is one of especial interest, as it marks the meeting of the currents of the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. We touched at St. Lawrence Island, and also visited Behring's Island, where we received first news from Europe through the resident agent of the Alaska Trading Company. We found here the fossil remains of an immense marine animal, probably Rhytina Stellari. We left the island on August 19, and had a pleasant voyage till 31st, when there was a gale, with lightning, which split our maintop, and injured slightly several men. Arrived at Yokohama 10.30 on the evening of the 2nd, all well. No deaths occurred during the voyage. Vega is the first to make this passage. Professor Norden-sköld thinks the voyage from Europe to Asia by Behring's Straits certain and safe with a little more experience of the northern seas. From Japan to Lena no difficulty, he says, presents itself to skilful sailors ; and as the Lena taps Central Siberia, there is a large prospective trade.

HIGHLAND CHIEFS OF THE OLDEN TIME.—Nothing can be more erroneous than the prevalent idea that a Highland Chief was an ignorant and unprincipled tyrant, who rewarded the abject submission of his followers with relentless cruelty and rigorous oppression. He was, on the contrary, the father of his people : gracious, condescending, and beloved. Far from being ruled by arbitrary caprice, he was taught from the cradle to consider the meanest individual of his clan as his kinsman and his friend, whom he was born to protect and bound to regard. He was taught, too, to venerate old age, to respect genius, and to place an almost implicit dependence on the counsels of the elders of his clan. Nay, so great was the prevalence of public spirit over private inclination among those habituated to consider themselves as born for the good of others, that a chieftain seldom contradicted the opinion of his counsellors in the most personal of all concerns, his choice of a companion for life. Conscious power, and the habit of receiving universal respect, gave dignity to his manners—still more elevated by that loftiness of conception incident to him who thinks not of himself, but enlarges his comprehension by balancing continually in his mind the concerns of many.—*Mrs. Grant, of Laggar.*

The Incarnation.

s, when across a darken'd room
A golden sunbeam strays,
Myriads of tiny motes are seen
Disporting in its rays ;

Such, in the dread Eternal's sight,
This universe appears,
With all its million million worlds
In their revolving spheres !

Ah, then, what thanks, Incarnate Lord,
Do I not owe to Thee,
Who, being in Thyself so high,
Wast made so low for me !

—*Caswall.*